

The Large Dark Prominent (*Notodonta torva* Huebner) in Eastbourne, Sussex, and the First Recorded Instance of the Capture of the Imago in Britain

By M. HADLEY *

On the evening of the 29th May 1979, I switched on the mercury vapour light trap in the garden, and the following morning inspection revealed a female notodontid resting on brickwork near the trap, which with the aid of "South" I identified as *Notodonta torva* Hbn., and apparently only the second confirmed occurrence of this species in Britain. The evening of the 29th was humid, with maximum temperature 12°C and a light southerly wind blowing.

N. torva is widespread abroad, and in France ranges from north to south, and I suspect that my specimen was a fortuitous migrant. Further indication that this moth was intercepted on a migration from the continent, is that of known migrant species being taken upon the same night by Mr. C. Pratt of Peacehaven, East Sussex, who lives a few miles along the coast from me. These were *Agrotis ipsilon* Hufnagel and *Autographa gamma* L. upon the 29th, 30th and 31st of the month. Herbulot (1971: 110) gives the flight time for *torva* in France as April/May.



Photo: Graeme of Eastbourne.

Fig. 1. *Notodonta torva* Hb., Eastbourne, 29.v.1979 (nat. size).

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank Mr. Colin Pratt and Mr. S. W. P. Pooles for kindly confirming the determination.

Reference

Herbulot, C. 1971. *Atlas des Lepidopteres de France, Belgique, Suisse, Italie du Nord. II Heteroceres*. Paris.

[Mr. Mark Hadley is to be congratulated on this highly notable capture, though it is unfortunate the specimen was not kept for eggs. The only other confirmed British *torva* is that mentioned in Barrett (1896, *The Lepidoptera of the British Islands*, 3: 123), who also figures in colour the actual specimen (*op. cit.*, *plt.* 107, fig. 1a) and says: "Only one reliable British specimen is known. It was reared by Mr. Frank Norgate, formerly of Sparham, Norfolk, now of Bury St. Edmund's, from either an egg or larva found by him in North Norfolk in July or August 1882 . . .". Norgate was regarded as absolutely trustworthy and besides Barrett (*loc. cit.*), both Meyrick (1895) and South (1907) accepted its authenticity unreservedly. — J.M.C.H.]

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